

NEW YORK Saturday Evening Journal

A HOME WEEKLY

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Vol. VIII.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 16, 1878.

TERMS IN ADVANCE.
One copy, four months, \$1.00
One copy, one year, \$2.00
Two copies, one year, \$3.00

No. 414

HOME.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD.

Without, the night is chill and cold;
Within the fire is bright,
And shelt'ring in home's happy fold
We dread no storm to-night.

We see the white snow falling fast,
We hear the wild winds shriek,
But listening to the mournful blast,
A smile is on each cheek.

But, ah, this dreary winter night,
How many wanderers roam,
Who shiver at the wind's delight
And know no place for home.

God pity all the homeless ones,
Wherever they may roam,
And grant them, all their wanderings done,
A place in God's dear home.

Happy Jack and Pard;

OR,

The White Chief of the Sioux.

A ROMANCE OF SPORTS AND PERILS OF POST AND PLAIN.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER I.

A FRONTIER FESSTAL.

"MAKES a feller 'most sorry for the old Injun fashion, eh, pard? I can't say as I ever hankered after the 'wimmen critters—they're most gen'ally bad medicine, an' they ain't many lodges big enough to hold them an' luck, too, to my notion; but when I first lay eyes on her, I had to fight mighty hard inside myself to keep from snatchin' her up an' makin' a tail-ender race fer it—I did so!"

"There's another man who thinks much the same, or his eyes speak false," quietly remarked the young man addressed, with a slight nod toward the small, flag-draped platform or pavilion. "He must be a new-comer, for I never saw him before."

"They ain't many men as care to see him twice. Take a good squar' look an' see what you kin make out from his face." The speakers—who are destined to figure prominently in this chronicle—were standing a little apart from the main gathering, and both were men who would attract attention in any crowd, though strong contrasts in nearly every respect.

The first speaker was scarcely of medium height; his limbs were small, but admirably rounded, and though at first glance he seemed almost effeminate, his strength, activity and wonderful skill in almost every species of athletics had long since passed into a proverb. His features were clear-cut and regular, and would have been fairly handsome only for the high cheekbones. His face was smooth and beardless, though the hair of his head was unusually heavy, falling in straight black masses below his shoulders. His eyes, though rather small, were wonderfully bright and keen, and few men could meet them fairly without an uncomfortable feeling of being read through and through.

His garments were almost severely plain, of Indian-tanned buck-skin, and minus all the fringes and beadings most men of his class are so fond of. Even his weapons were unadorned. Yet one object about him shone and sparkled in the sunlight: a beautifully-embroidered and ornamented pouch hung upon his breast—a "medicine-bag."

Such was William—or "BILL COMSTOCK," the scout and guide. His career, though briefer, was no less famous than that of Wild Bill or Buffalo Bill, and to this day many a rough voice grows soft, many a hard eye dims, as the memory of the true-hearted scout is recalled to the mind. True as steel to a friend—bitter as death to an enemy, he died in harness, nobly performing his duty; and now lies in a nameless grave. Peace to his ashes!

His companion—known far and wide as "Happy Jack"—was of a different type. He was a sturdy, full-chested, with a round, compact waist, swelling hips and long limbs; a model of manly strength and symmetry. His complexion was fair, his features almost classically regular, his eyes large and deep blue. A heavy mustache shaded his lips, while a magnificent beard hung in yellow curls to his shoulders. His dress, like that of his partner, was mainly of buck-skin, and bore traces of recent hard riding and rough living.

"Unless my eyes deceive me," he said, after a steady gaze in the direction indicated by Comstock, "that man is what you rarely see—a brave tyrant. God help the man—or woman—whose only hope is in his mercy!"

"I knowed you'd see it," laughed the scout, softly. "That's Cap'n Stone, of the —. He managed to git him changed to this regiment. I don't reckon he'd 'a' lived through the next scrimmage—indeed, the boys didn't make no secret of it, but said right out that he'd die from ahead, the very first charge that come."

"He doesn't look like a man who would run from even such a danger," thoughtfully said Happy Jack.

"No more he would—without a fair cause," grinned Comstock, nodding toward the pavilion.

"To do him justice, they ain't a more dand'ly devil man, nor a better Injun-fighter than him. But there's the little gal kin take him into camp!"

"I feel sorry for her," was the scout's only reply.

The subject of this brief conversation was seated beside a lady near the upper end of the pavilion. Tall, well-proportioned, dark and handsome, a finely-educated man with rare conversational powers, Captain Lawrence Stone was laying himself out to please the young lady beside him with an interest and ardor that he made no attempt to disguise from the eyes of those around. Indeed, so impressive did his air become that the lady arose and hastily approached the edge of the pavilion nearest the crowd. Captain Stone followed, a hot flush passing swiftly across his brow.

The unpollished though sincere praise of the scout had not been unfounded. Kate Markham, daughter of the colonel commanding, was indeed a beautiful woman. That she was barely up to



"That's enough, pard!" cried Happy Jack. "You mean well, but I don't need any man to fight my battles."

the middle height, that her form was full and admirably symmetrical without being too plump, that she was a perfect brunette, with jetty-black hair, clear complexion, rosebud mouth and large, brilliant eyes; all this is easily said, but the words give only a faint and unsatisfactory idea of the reality. With each passing mood she seemed quite a different person—alike only in being charming, bewitching in all.

The hot blood mantled her cheek as she felt the presence of the captain at her elbow, and as though dreading what he might intend saying, she hastily uttered:

"Pray—who is that gentleman talking to father?"

"Gentleman?" echoed Captain Stone, with a scarcely-disguised sneer. "Ah, perhaps you mean yonder fellow with the long hair?"

"I mean the gentleman with the golden curls—yes," replied Kate, with a provoking emphasis.

"That is Happy Jack, as men call him, a sort of scout or camp-follower, I believe. I fear though, Miss Kate, that few would recognize him by your description."

"Indeed! after such a proof of your blindness, I shall think twice before believing any more of your pretty speeches. With all respect, he is the handsomest man I have seen in a year—and I'm going to ask papa for an introduction."

With a mischievous laugh, Kate Markham ran lightly down the broad steps and approached her father, who was seated in a high-backed chair, looking on with interest at the scene before him.

With a military salute the scout turned away and rejoined his partner. Colonel Markham greeted his petted—if not spoiled—child with a sunny smile that partly betrayed the deep, almost passionate love he felt for her parent, but if she really had such an idea, it was frustrated. With a military salute the scout turned away and rejoined his partner.

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"Now that I have made my report, suppose you give me an idea of what all this fanfare means?" said Happy Jack, as he rejoined his friend, Comstock.

"It's for her, pard. She came out here—from somewhere in the States, I reckon, what she's bin to school, or sich like. She come out here a week ago, an' the old man he 'lowed he'd show how proud he was, by givin' a ginevine prairie circus. I reckon everybody an' his yaller dog'll be here. They's money in it, too, lettin' alone the fun. The old man don't often git off 'im his reg'lar beat, but when he do, he jist spreads hisself wide open—you hear me?"

And the enthusiastic scout hurried off his friend to view the various prizes which were to be awarded to the victors in the coming sports.

For the most part these were particularly appropriate, considering the probable contestants; a beautifully-finished rifle, a brace of revolvers, a silver-mounted saddle and horse furniture, together with smaller prizes of money.

While examining these, the two scouts were suddenly separated as two officers pressed rudely between them. The taller one pointed out the saddle, saying in a clear tone:

"I mean to carry off that prize, and as a proof that I mean what I say, I am ready to wager one hundred dollars with any gentleman."

"Money talks," quickly uttered Happy Jack, shaking off the hand of his friend and facing the officer. "I accept your wager, Captain Stone."

"And who may you be?" insolently demanded the officer, eying the scout from head to foot.

"I said any gentleman—"

"I claim to be one, sir, as I will cheerfully

convince you at any time or place you may choose to name. Meanwhile, if you have any doubts, you can settle them by one word with Colonel Markham. Here is the money—cover it, or own that you were talking just for the sake of hearing your own voice."

"You have said more than enough," replied Captain Stone, in a voice that trembled despite his iron nerves. "Lieutenant Blake, will you do us the honor to hold stakes? Thanks. I trust you are satisfied?" he added, abruptly turning to Happy Jack.

"Perfectly," bowed the scout.

"I hope you may be able to say as much by this time to-morrow," and with a little laugh the captain strode away toward the pavilion.

"You've stirred up an ugly devil, pard," earnestly said Comstock, as they turned away from the little crowd. "He's giv' his rattle; he'll not wait long afore strikin'!"

"At any other time or place he wouldn't have had time to do either," was the quiet reply. "He did not crowd us like that for nothing. I can't imagine his reasons, but I feel that he came here simply to pick a quarrel."

"I reckon he couldn't come to a better place for gettin' the full wuth o' his money," grinned Comstock.

"I'll do my best to satisfy him, at least. But now—about this bet; what is the saddle offered for?"

"The old trick—you remember the fun we had down Taos way! Pluckin' the cock—el grilo."

"Old 'Paint' will do, then," muttered the scout, glancing toward a curiously-spotted mustang that stood near.

"I wouldn't like to trust Simoom in the scrimmage."

"You'll need a fast an' a good horse, sure. The cap'n is a born devil to ride, an' the tricks he don't know ain't wuth much. You'd better take my critter—"

"No—old 'Paint' knows me better, and is plenty fresh enough. See! there goes the gallop! He'll be with you in a jiffy!"

"Injun Dan! the blackest thief unthung! I'd give a hoss to know jist what they're sayin'. Ha! I knowed it! they're goin' to saddle up. Good enough! I reckon I'll take a hand in the game."

"Then you think—"

"I think that ef Mister Injun Dan tries any o' his underhand tricks, he'll run ag'inst a snag. I won't interfere unless he does. You never mind him, but jist keep an eye on the cap'n."

There was no time to say more, for the signal was blown for the contestants to appear before the judge's stand, where the rules governing "El Gallo" were briefly stated. A rooster was buried in the earth, leaving only its head and neck, both plentifully besmeared with grease, above ground. The competitors, their position being decided by drawing lots, were to ride one hundred yards at full gallop, bend in the saddle and endeavor to pluck the cock from its resting-place with naked hand. When one succeeded, all the others were at liberty to pursue and seek to wrest the trophy from him. All maneuvers were fair in which no weapon was used. A post was planted one-half mile distant from the bird. This must be rounded, and then the starting-point regained. The victor would be he who carried home the live bird; or, if torn to pieces in the *melee*, the one who could produce the cock's head.

Then the lots were drawn, and the sports began. Comstock was sixth, Happy Jack seventh, while Captain Stone was last, or the thirteenth man. None but crack riders had entered, few caring to risk their necks unless pretty confident in their skill.

At the blast of a bugle the foremost rider dashed off, passing close beside the buried rooster, stooping low in the saddle and making a grasp at the bird's neck; but in vain. The cock twisted its long neck to one side, and the baffled horseman flushed hotly as his ears tingled with the ironical cheers of the spectators, as, according to the rules, he swept round to assume a position in the rear of the competitors.

Again and again this was enacted with scarce a variation, though more than one of the riders succeeded in touching the bird's head, despite its dodging. Then Bill Comstock spurred forth, riding his tough little mustang like one born to the pig-skin. Differing from his predecessors, the scout lay along his mustang's side from the first, and sunk lower as he advanced until his right hand swept the ground for several yards before the bird was reached. Then he made his grasp, aiming not for the head of the bird, but rather at the point where its neck disappeared below the surface. The bird dodged, but the scout's eye was true, and a shower of sand arose as Comstock, with a wild yell, swung the fowl above his head.

But as many a man before him, the scout laughed out of time. The cock's head was small—it being a pet game-cock which one young but enthusiastic admirer of Miss Kate had contributed, poultry being anything but plenty at the hands of Comstock. Scarcely had it recovered its feet when Happy Jack was beside it, and stooping low, firmly grasped its legs, then sped toward the distant post, with a clear, ringing shout that thrilled the nerves of every contestant much as the picking of a banjo touches the strings of a day's heels.

Happy Jack rode in strict Indian fashion, without saddle or bridle, a scrap of buffalo-hide being securely strapped upon the spotted mustang's back. To the stout horse-hair girth were attached several stout loops, while the long mane was knotted together in a style decidedly more useful than ornamental. The use of these devices was speedily made manifest.

With loud shouts, the contestants rushed after the scout who was steadily nearing the turning-post. To all present it seemed as though Happy Jack was urging his mustang to its highest speed, yet he was rapidly being overhauled; but then Bill Comstock grinned broadly. He read the solution of Old Paint's sudden loss of speed.

Just before him rode the half-breed, Indian Dan, mercilessly lashing his big horse with a small coil of rawhide. On this Comstock kept his eye, believing as he did that Captain Stone had come to some understanding with the fellow that involved foul play. And a moment later he had the reward of his vigilance. He saw the savage quickly separate the twisted coils and stoop low in the saddle as his big horse forged alongside the scout, and giving his mustang the spur, Comstock glided forward, just in time to catch the bird as it came to the forefoot of Old Paint, but at the same moment a strong hand grasped his foot and hurled him violently from the saddle, completely felling him dastardly attempt.

Then it was that Happy Jack shone forth in all his glory as a consummate tactician and skilled horseman. He was surrounded upon all hands by eager horsemen, each grasping quickly at the fluttering cock, crowding and pressing around and bringing Old Paint almost to a standstill. Among all none seemed more eager than Bill Comstock, though one in the secret

would have seen that he was actually aiding Happy Jack, and urging the *melee* on toward the now near turning-post. Then it was that Old Paint played his part in genuine mustang style, biting, kicking and plunging furiously as the horses crowded him, all the time edging slowly but steadily toward the post. And Happy Jack—a dozen eyes could not have followed his motions. Now erect, holding the cock high above the wildly-gesticulating hands, now lying low upon Old Paint's back; again, hanging by one foot in a loop, his body almost touching the trampled sands, first on one side, then the other, and more than once slipping entirely to the ground when pressed too close; but all the time working his way toward the boundary, and never once losing his grasp upon the now loudly-squalling cock.

Then, for the first time, he called upon Old Paint, and right nobly the mustang responded, plunging ahead with an impetus that would not be denied, bursting clear through the crowd and sweeping around the boundary post. Happy Jack holding the cock aloft that all might see, then making a bold sweep over the prairie, the spotted mustang developing a burst of speed that astonished all who had rated him according to his first display.

Though now leading the race, Happy Jack saw that his work was not yet done. Just abreast him rode one man, who thus far had been contented with hanging upon the edge of the *melee*, though closely watching every move in the rapidly-shifting game. Keenly Happy Jack looked at the big, clean-limbed black, and uttered a low whistle that sent Old Paint forward as though hurled from a catapult. But the big black kept its distance, apparently without any extra effort. Indeed the taut reins told a plain story of more speed held in reserve.

The scout saw, too, that unless there was a speedy change, the two horses would come fairly together long before the goal was reached. Already the distance was so short that he could plainly read the sneering smile that curled Captain Stone's lips, and in that moment he knew that he would rather suffer death than defeat at the hands of such a man. Yet he dare not slacken his speed, for that would be to plunge again into the thick of the crowd, and his exertions were beginning to tell upon Old Paint, who had covered over a hundred miles within the last forty hours.

He had little time for thought. The goal was now close at hand, and Captain Stone could afford to dally no longer. He loosened the reins, and the big black was beside Old Paint almost at a bound. And in the instant that intervened, Happy Jack read the purpose of his rival.

He saw the devilish glitter in the stern black eyes, he read the vicious smile as the strong hand pulled hard upon the cruel curb. The black horse reared high in the air—the plunged madly forward as the reins were suddenly relaxed, his hoofs striking fairly upon the spotted mustang's back, just where Happy Jack had been sitting an instant before, crushing him to the earth, and almost losing its own footing.

A cry of horror arose from the gathering, as they saw the mustang go down—but then a wild, prolonged, and enthusiastic cheer arose, as they saw the scout leap from the ground and alight upon the black horse, directly behind the solidly-plunging rival, and with a single bound saw him struggle for an instant with his rival, then guide the black horse swiftly on—to the winning post. They saw that he still held the cock, that his arms held those of Captain Stone close to his side, his own hands grasping the reins and bit, as he passed before the judge, who promptly nodded his head.

Then the scout sprung lightly to the ground, with an absurdly polite bow to the almost suffocated captain, whose lips fairly frothed with rage and mortification.

CHAPTER II.

WILD SPORTS OF THE PLAINS.

"GIVE me a knife—a pistol, somebody—quick!" snarled Captain Stone, fairly crazed by the loud cheers and peals of laughter that greeted the bold exploit of the scout. "Curse you! I'll tear your heart out!" and he sprang to the ground, striding toward the smiling scout, evidently bent on mischief.

"Here you've got it, cap'n," cried Bill Comstock, as he leaped between the two, confronting the infuriated officer with a cocked and leveled revolver. "Here's the bull-pup you was axin' fer—an' its bite means sudden death, too!"

"That's enough, pard!" cried Happy Jack, thrusting the scout aside with a strong hand. "You mean well, but I don't need any man to fight my battles."

"Down with that weapon, Comstock! down, I say, or your arm will be one hand the shorter!" rung out a stern, commanding voice, as Colonel Markham galloped to the spot, his saber flashing brightly. "And you, Captain Stone—a fine example you are setting the men! For shame, sir!"

"He insulted me—it was a foul trick—"

"And how much better was your own conduct—or rather, how much worse! Bah! do you think to daunt me with your black looks? I watched you closely—I saw your every movement, and had you succeeded in your attempt, a man would be lying out yonder with a broken back, instead of that poor horse. No reply, sir; consider yourself lucky that I do not order you under guard for attempted murder."

"It was but the fortune of war, colonel," interposed Happy Jack. "If I am content to pass it by, surely there need no more be said."

"If my conduct needs any defense, it will not be made through your lips," said Captain Stone, suddenly recovering his usual self-possession. "Lieutenant Blake, you will please cancel that debt. And now, sir," he continued, as the money stake was placed in the scout's hands, "one word with you in private—"

"Not another word!" firmly cried Colonel Markham. "Captain Stone, you will come with me."

For an instant the eager spectators believed that the captain was about to give an angry refusal, but they were disappointed. Saluting stiffly, Captain Stone followed his superior officer to the pavilion.

"I come mighty nigh playin' the fool, jist then, old man," said Comstock, "an' I'd a' let daylight clean through the critter, ef you hadn't ketchin' my arm."

"You mean well, Bill, I know that; but I'd rather fight my own battles, all the same, I

AN IDYL OF THE PAST.

BY WILLI M. TENNYSON HEATON.

The sunset kissed the yellow hill,
In the v of the first star shone,
Twilight shrouded off and mill,
And darkened hall and home,
From o'er the wave the vesper bell
Rung forth the hour of prayer—
On the tower the moonlight fell,
And on the stony stair.

The wind swept up the river plain—
A gentle summer breeze—
Crept along the winding lane,
And o'er the dewy leas.
Around my heart the shadows fell—
Only a word—
But sadder seemed that last farewell
Than a farewell to the dead!

Wife or Widow?

OR,

ETHELIND ERLE'S ENEMY.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "A GIRL'S HEART," "A DANGEROUS WOMAN," "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

INVESTIGATIONS.

"A moment stop! my lord, my lord,
Spare him—I kneel to you and wet the ground
With tears."
—BARRY CORNWALL.

Poor Dolores passed an anxious and sleepless night after the commission of her husband for trial.

About nine o'clock the next morning, having dressed herself in a suit of plain black, and put on her bonnet and shawl, she was about to leave the house when Aunt Jerry stalked out of the drawing-room, and planted herself directly in the way.

"Where are you going?" she demanded, in a curt tone.

"To visit my husband."

Aunt Jerry drew herself up with an angry snort.

"Your husband?" she sneered. "That wretch is no more your husband than I am. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Dolores Glyone."

Dolores bit her lip, and made an effort to pass on; but again she was intercepted.

"Stay where you are, you rebellious child. With my consent, you shall never pass out of that door bound on such a reprehensible errand."

"It is my duty to go," said Dolores, gently but firmly.

"Duty!" shrieked Aunt Jerry. "It is your duty to yield obedience to those who are older and wiser than yourself. Go back to your room, miss."

"I cannot. My husband expects me; I must go to him."

"I forbid you to go."

"But you have no authority to control my actions. I owe submission to none save my God and my dear husband."

Aunt Jerry trembled with passion.

"Girl, is it your deliberate purpose to defy me?" she raved.

"No, I have no wish to do that," said Dolores, still speaking in a calm and gentle voice, though there was a flash of fire in her brilliant dark eyes.

"But you should not usurp authority that does not rightfully belong to you. If you do, I have no resource but to rebel."

There was a silence. Suddenly Aunt Jerry caught hold of the girl's hand—her own was cold as ice—and saying "Come with me," in a dry, hard voice, drew her forward into the drawing-room. All that was mortal of Egbert Challoner lay there waiting for the last sad rites, which were to be performed at a later hour of that same day. The burial had been postponed as long as possible that Raymond might be present and superintend arrangements himself.

Aunt Jerry drew the shrinking girl close up to the coffin, which stood in the middle of the darkened room.

"Look there!" she said, in a raised voice, uncovering the face of the dead. "Look at your poor, murdered grandfather, and then go to the wretch who assassinated him if you have the heart to do it!"

Dolores burst into tears.

"Don't, Aunt Jerry. You shock and distress me. My burden is heavier than I can well bear, already."

Struggling clear of those relentless hands, Dolores hurried back to the hall, and sinking on a chair, gave way to a perfect storm of sorrow.

"You do feel ashamed of yourself—that is evident," said Aunt Jerry, grimly, for she had followed the girl out.

"No, it isn't that. But a trouble like this is so horrible. Sometimes I almost give way. But Vincent is innocent of poor grandpa's death! Did I not believe this from the depths of my soul I should shrink from him in as great horror as you do."

"Poor fool! Did not the murdered man's very last words fix the crime upon that villain?"

"It was a mistake—a dreadful mistake," shivered poor Dolores. "There was no light in the room, and grandpa must have taken some one else for Vincent."

"Poor deluded fool!"

"I would stake my life on his innocence, and have told him so."

"You intend to cling to him in spite of everything?"

"I do."

"Mad girl! It is a wonder that your murdered relative does not rise out of his coffin to reproach you."

Dolores resolutely wiped away her tears.

"Appearances are very much against my husband," she said, very low. "But that is no reason why I should condemn him. Some day, this mystery will be cleared up, and I shall try to be patient until that time comes."

And before Aunt Jerry could raise another objection, Dolores had quietly stepped past, and left the house.

Like all gentle, loving women, she listened not to the voice of reason, but to that of her heart. In spite of the damning evidence against him, it was simply impossible for her to believe Vincent guilty of the heinous crime laid to his charge.

She found him pacing the floor of his cell, pale but calm. He had already had an interview with Mr. Nolan, the attorney who had been secured to defend him, and the man had just gone away with the frank admission that the case promised to be the most difficult one he had ever handled.

At the sight of his wife, however, the prisoner attempted to banish every appearance of concern from his manner and countenance; and embracing her, said cheerfully:

"You come into my cell like a sunbeam, Dolores, only you are a little paler."

"I have brought you a little package," said Dolores, speaking in a hurried tone, to hide her agitation. "Here it is," and taking a roll of bank-notes from her pocket she spread them on the little table under the window.

"Why, where did you get so much money?" Vincent asked, in a tone of surprise.

"It was intrusted to me by your sister Ethelind before she went away, yesterday afternoon. She said this would secure a great many comforts that you might otherwise be compelled to do without. And she wished me to urge upon you the necessity of employing the very best counsel in the State for your defense. Her purse is at your command."

"Heaven bless her!" cried the poor prisoner, in a tone of deep emotion. "I know she would do anything for the world to help me."

Then, forcing a smile, he added:

"I feel very rich, darling. See, I can duplicate the sum you have brought, note by note."

So indeed he could. For, producing a second roll very similar in appearance to the first, he placed a note of like denomination upon each of those Dolores had laid down.

Looking into her wondering eyes, he said:

"This is Colonel Falkner's gift. He pushed the money into my hand when he came to see good-by."

"I am very glad."

Before she could add another word, the cell-door was opened, and the warden ushered in a small, quiet-looking man who proved to be none other than our old friend, Detective Ferret.

When the warden had withdrawn, and Vincent turned to greet the detective, Dolores placed herself beside him and said, eagerly:

"I intended this as a surprise, my love. I sent for Mr. Ferret, and have secured his services that the mysterious crime for which you suffer may be thoroughly investigated."

"Thank you, Dolores. It was, perhaps, the wisest thing you could have done."

Mr. Ferret quietly helped himself to a chair.

"What defense did you offer at the examination, Mr. Ferret?" he said, fixing his light gray eyes upon the young man's face.

"None, except to put in the plea of 'not guilty,' and assure the magistrate and jury that I had left Mr. Challoner's grounds immediately after parting with Dolores, and had set out for Glenoaks without a moment's delay."

"What proof did you offer to substantiate your statement?"

"Alas, I had none save my simple word."

The detective appeared to ruminate for some time. At length he said:

"You may tell everything you can remember that has any bearing upon the events of that fatal night."

Vincent and Dolores, together, were enabled to give Mr. Ferret a very clear idea of the events that had already come to light. The two points in which he manifested particular interest, however, were those of Madam Zoe's mysterious disappearance, and the fact that Aunt Jerry had encountered a woman in the corridor when she was hurrying down-stairs after having been aroused by the cries of the murdered man.

"Where do the friends of this Madam Zoe reside?" he inquired.

"I do not know," Dolores answered; "but it is my belief that she resided in the South before coming to Dingle Dell."

"Who recommended her to Mr. Challoner?"

"She brought no testimonials. I have heard Aunt Jerry say. In the first place, she was taken on trial; but her duties were performed in a manner so satisfactory that she was permanently engaged."

"Did she never allude to her former life?"

"Never. Indeed she seemed averse to speaking of it even to answer such questions as might, from time to time, be asked."

"Of course she received letters occasionally from her friends?"

"No, sir. None ever came for her."

"That is strange," said the detective, in a musing tone.

"It is believed by some," said Dolores, looking up quickly, "that Madam Zoe could give important testimony in this case, and has withdrawn herself for that very reason."

"Humph!" muttered Mr. Ferret, shaking his head.

When he left the prison, however, he went directly to the railway station, and inquired for the night-agent. The man could throw no light upon the mystery, however. He had been at his post the night in question, but was certain that no lady had purchased a ticket of him, though several gentlemen had done so.

"How far is it to the next station?" Mr. Ferret inquired.

"Four miles," he replied.

"Above or below?"

"Below."

Mr. Ferret hurried to the nearest livery-stable, and hired a boy to drive him down. Having reached his destination, and found the station-agent, the first question was this:

"Do all the night-trains stop here?"

"Yes, sir," was the ready answer. "They take in wood and water at this point."

"How many night-trains are there?"

"Four, all told, sir—that is, I mean two each way," replied the station-agent, a big, rough-looking fellow who seemed to be something of a gossip.

"They pass each other here."

"At what hours?"

"Ten in the evening and four in the morning."

A great many people take tickets from this station, I suppose?"

"Well, not so very many, sir," said the man, scratching his head. "Such as do, come, for the most part, from the village one mile below, down in the hollow. Some days there are half a dozen; and very often, at night, there's nobody."

"Can you tell me if there was anybody to take the four o'clock train, Tuesday morning?"

"Tuesday? Let me see! That was the morning after poor old Mr. Challoner was murdered."

"Yes, I believe so."

"Why, bless you, sir, there were two, that morning, and cur's customers they were, too. Never opened their heads to speak to a body, if they could help it."

"Men?"

"No, sir, a man and a woman. The man was all muffled up about his face. He rushed up, just as the train was ready to start, threw down his money and asked, in a squeaky voice, for a ticket to B—."

"I gave him one, and he climbed onto the rear car just as the train was moving off."

"Did the woman go by the same train?"

"No, sir. She went in the opposite direction; and I should have told you about her afore, for she was the first to leave. She came in all alone, about three, and inquired about the train. She said a few words, and then went out; and of course I stepped to the door and looked after her. She was walking up and down the railroad track, sir, as if she was on a wagger."

"Did you see her face?" asked Mr. Ferret, eagerly.

"I did not. She was dressed in black, and had her veil down. I don't think she was a young woman, sir; but she was straight as a sapling for all that. She purchased no ticket, but I saw her get aboard the down-train. There was something cur'ous about that woman, sir."

The detective was of the same opinion; but he merely said:

"Have you any grounds for thinking that the man and woman were acquaintances?"

"Not the slightest, sir, and what's more, I don't think so. The down-train leaves some three or four minutes before the other; and so far as I know the woman came and was gone before the man got here at all."

Mr. Ferret said nothing more, but he mentally decided that the whole circumstance was a very singular one.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COLONEL FALKNER'S PERPLEXITY.

"Who that hath ever been,
Could bear to be no more,
Yet who would tread again the scene
He trod through life before."
—MONTGOMERY.

The night was hot and still. Scarce a breath of air ruffled the foliage of the dark old trees that drooped lovingly over the gray walls of Glenoaks. The atmosphere seemed heavy and oppressive.

Until a late hour Colonel Philip Falkner sat in the small room on the ground floor that had been fitted up for a private study, poring over legal documents and reports of famous trials. He hoped to gather from these papers some hint that might be useful to Vincent; for though there were doubts in his own mind of the young man's innocence, he did not wish to see him suffer the full penalty of the law.

Rising languidly at length, as if wearied out with his long sitting, Colonel Falkner proceeded to the open window, and after standing there a moment, stepped out. The crimson curtains fell together behind him, and the lamp that still

burned within was the only indication that the room had been inhabited at all that evening.

Gray, leaden clouds covered the whole heavens like a pall. Even the night-birds were still; and the heavy, oppressive scent of flowers filled the air almost to faintness.

Curious, once into the shrubbery, Colonel Falkner walked thoughtfully on in the direction of the sea. He had not proceeded far, however, when he saw some dark object flit swiftly from one group of evergreens to another, and pause there as if to rest or reconnoiter, though his movements there was an evident desire to shun observation.

"It is Ethelind," he thought. "Rash girl! She should not be wandering abroad at this hour of the night."

Sheltering himself behind a convenient trellis, he waited for the dark figure to come nearer. Several minutes elapsed before it moved at all, and then, as if in a sudden accession of courage, it started up and glided swiftly past within three or four yards of Colonel Falkner's hiding-place.

To his intense surprise, the figure did not prove to be Ethelind's after all, but that of a strange lady dressed in black, whose head and face were closely muffled in a thick veil.

She glided on rapidly in the direction of the house; and Colonel Falkner, startled, perplexed and curious, immediately turned and followed her, taking care to keep in the shadow and so far behind as not to attract her attention.

The mysterious lady made her way directly toward the window of the study, where the light still burned brightly behind the closely-drawn curtains, and, right before him, she stood for some time motionless, her head bowed, as if either listening or praying.

Colonel Falkner stole a few steps nearer, feeling more bewildered than ever. Suddenly the woman flung up her hands wildly, and a subdued wail came from her lips.

"Oh, Philip, pity me! My heart is breaking!"

Something in that low, thrilling voice caused Colonel Falkner to start as though he had received an electric shock. It sounded familiar, and she had spoken his name! What did it mean?

Did she know under whose window she stood, and was she there simply because it was his?

His heart beat a little faster, but he sprang forward, and caught the woman by the arm.

"Who are you?" he sternly demanded.

There was no answer save a low, frightened moan, and she seemed to shrink away from him as if in deadly terror.

"What are you doing here? Speak!"

In another instant he would have torn away the muffling veil, but the woman eluded the movement, and wrenching her arm from his grasp, darted swiftly past, and fled, with a shrill cry into the darkest and densest of the shrubbery.

Colonel Falkner followed, but he could not overtake her. The black dress she wore blended naturally with the shadows that everywhere peopled the grounds, and at the distance of a few rods she was completely lost to observation.

He hesitated at last in sheer despair, and at the same instant a bitter, mocking laugh sounded behind him.

"You do well to give up the pursuit, Colonel Falkner. That woman is fleet of foot than yourself—you cannot overtake her."

It was Ethelind's voice, and looking round in astonishment, he saw the girl standing just beyond him, her white, wasted features dimly distinguishable in the uncertain light.

"Ethelind!"

"Yes, it is I! You need not look so shocked."

"It is enough to shock me to find you roaming about at midnight. Are you mad?"

She passed both hands quickly over her forehead.

"Mad? Yes, I have been delirious these many weeks."

"Poor child," he said, in a tone of infinite pity. "I believe you."

"Then my vagaries should no longer astonish you."

"They pain me, Ethelind, deeply pain and grieve me. But you must not remain here. Take my arm, and I will lead you back to the house."

The obeyed, submissively as a little child, and not another word was spoken until he had drawn her through the open window, and they stood within the little study, when the lamplight fell on her pallid face and burning eyes.

"Now tell me why you were in the grounds?" he said.

"I could not sleep, and felt too nervous to remain in-doors," she answered, without looking at him. "Was it a greater crime for me to seek the fresh air than for you?"

"At least it is scarcely decorous for a young lady to be wandering about at midnight."

"I regret having offended against your notions of propriety," said Ethelind; but her tone was proud and cold.

Colonel Falkner remained silent for a moment, his eyes bent fixedly upon the girl's face. Suddenly he heaved a sigh, and said in a changed voice:

"You, too, saw that strange woman I was pursuing?"

"I did."

"Who is she?"

"Do you not know?" Ethelind asked, quickly, meeting his gaze now for the first time.

"I have not the slightest suspicion."

"Then I can give you the necessary information. I saw her first, and I followed her to your drawing-room with a half-suppressed cry of amazement."

"What! the new tenant of Lorn?"

"The very same."

"Indeed! I wonder that I did not think of her long ago. I have been told that Mrs. Faunce always goes abroad muffled up very much like the woman in question."

"I am not her confidant," was the haughty answer.

"It seems very singular," he went on, as if she had not spoken. "I cannot make it out. Mrs. Faunce! The name is not a familiar one. And yet—"

Ethelind waited to hear no more. Her first impulse had been to tell him of that first visit Mrs. Faunce had paid to his chamber while he lay ill of the wound he had received. But she would not yield to it. Shaking away from him, she glided, without another word, from the room.

"If Mrs. Faunce loves him, and wishes to keep that love a secret, I have no right to betray her," she thought. "I have been told that Mrs. Faunce always goes abroad muffled up very much like the woman in question."

He spoke in a slow, dreamy tone, like one whose thoughts were busy.

"Yes, I know why Mrs. Faunce came here," he asked abruptly, after a pause.

"I am not her confidant," was the haughty answer.

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JANE SHORE.

1482.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

The king is gone! another fate!
When will these pleasures cease to whom
The life that longs with death to mate—
The heart exiled from virtue's realm?
What! faded? No! my mirror tells
That I am fair as when that day,
For me rung out the wedding bells,
And cheap tide smiled to see me gay!

There was a time—could I forget—
When I was happy by the side
Of one who somewhere lingers yet—
Who won my girlhood's guileless pride.
But now a wretched woman, I!
A loathsome yet a lovely thing,
Unto my God a living lie,
The puppet of a warlike king!

His wife? no! I am not his wife!
There is a name I dare not speak,
That which I am—will be thro' life!
Like heated iron, it sears my cheek.
The ooze of hell's remorseless stones
Falls on my brain with ceaseless drip;
Its icy horrors chill my bones,
And Judas-like makes every lip.

I am the king's! That word again
That haunts my pillow in the night!
It burns into my tortured brain,
Never to be exiled from my sight!
To me bow Edward's courtiers all,
A handsome, fickle, fawning band;
Eager to catch the words that fall
From lips, the fates of the land!

He made me what I am! His word
Is law unto the English race;
I'd rather be his rusted sword
Than bear this moment of disgrace.
Then—then, thank God! I would forget;
A sword hath neither heart nor brain;
A rusted sword is seldom worn,
Except by tears or crimson stain.

The nightly revel where I drink
And bow to the applause of men
Memory cannot drown! I think
Think madly of what might have been!
Oh! Edward, would we ne'er had met!
Oh! that I had been a wall of steel
For there is one who loves me o'er!
Whom I will love for evermore!

My Arab Angel.

A Story of the Great Syrian Desert.

BY COL. DELLE SARA.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1868, found me standing, a free man, in the streets of Cairo—no Cairo, Illinois; that name, applied to this by man's genius in about the worst swamp and on the most unlikely spot for a city—leaving the two rivers out of the question—that could be chosen; but Cairo, Egypt, the land of the pyramids, the kingdom of the khedive.

After our late "oppressantness" was over, like a great many others, used to years of military life, and not knowing what on earth to do to get a decent living in any civil occupation, I emigrated to Mexico and entered Maximilian's service, where, like the rest, I received more kicks than half-pence; the downfall of the emperor, abandoned by that prince of jugglers and charlatans, the Dutchman who dazzled France with the name of Napoleon, and humbugged all Europe into the belief that he was a statesman, and betrayed by the scurvy Mexican officers whom he trusted, set me once more free to sell my sword to the highest bidder. And as the khedive of Egypt, just at that time, was making flattering offers to American officers to enter his service, I was induced to negotiate, and finally accepted a position in his forces.

After a fair trial, though I became dissatisfied, and then had the luck to become involved, despite myself, in a quarrel with one of the civil officers of the khedive, a portly, arrogant Englishman, who had an idea that he knew about everything that was worth knowing, and that everybody ought to give way to him. Well, this gentleman took offense at some remarks of mine, forced me into a quarrel, and finally challenged me. In my hot-headed way, I accepted, and had the satisfaction of putting a bullet through the shoulder of my antagonist at the first fire. I could easily have put it through his head, but I didn't wish to kill the man, for I have been a dead-shot with the revolver ever since I was a soldier.

This little affair terminated my engagement with his lordship of Egypt, and so, as I said at the beginning, Christmas morning found me a free man, wondering in what direction I should next turn my footsteps.

A passer-by accosted me, an honest Hebrew merchant of my acquaintance—Moses Cohen by name.

Noticing that I was in plain clothes he inquired the reason.

I explained that I was no longer in the Egyptian service.

"And what are you going to do now?" he asked.

I replied that I had not yet decided.

"If you have a few hundred dollars that you care to invest in trade, I can put you in the way of making a good thing of it," with a knowing wink.

As I happened to be pretty well situated as far as money was concerned, I was once resolved to embrace the offer, particularly as I knew Cohen to be a shrewd, honest fellow, and so I told him that I would be pleased to join in the enterprise.

He gave me the details at once.

A caravan was about to start from Cairo and penetrate into the Syrian Desert, there to traffic with a certain tribe of Arabs for horses, those steeds of the desert, "shod with fire," and for which there is always such an excellent market.

I went with my honest Hebrew friend at once and was introduced to his partners in the enterprise.

Two days later we set out.

Counting our servants we mustered some fifteen strong, a force rather small to encounter the perils of the desert, I thought, and so expressed my opinion to my associates, but they assured me that there was no danger; that the wild tribes never molested the trading caravans, but I noticed, though, that my honest friends were careful to keep a vigilant watch after nightfall.

The danger that I dreaded came at last; we were some fifty miles from the town of Boxrah and had got fairly into the desert, and were within two days' journey of our objective point, when our camp was rudely awakened from its slumber one night by a fierce and sudden attack.

The Arabs—a horde of thieves of all the wild tribes—were upon us in full force.

Our sentries had slumbered upon their posts, and the first thing we knew of the attack was the wild yell of the fierce warriors right in our midst.

Sleeping as I constantly did with my hand on my revolver—but, I was ready for action in an instant. I let fly three shots and then a fierce Bedouin—a gray-bearded old chap, evidently a man of note—rode me down; I partly dodged the horse, saw the flash of the rider's steel as he whirled his sabre in the air, and understanding that my head was in danger, threw up my arm to ward off the blow.

My head escaped the full force of the shock, although getting a pretty smart tap, but my arm suffered, and, somehow, over I went in a swoon. I fancy that the horse pranced sideways, knocked me down and then trod on me; anyway, when I recovered I was sore in every limb.

Some time elapsed before I recovered my senses. When I came to it was broad daylight and I found myself reclining on a sumptuous couch in an apartment well furnished after the Eastern style; my arm had been placed in a sling, refreshments were on a low stool by my couch, and a few pages from my bedside, reclining on an ottoman, was as fair a dusky maid as ever my eyes had looked upon.

An Arab angel and no mistake!
Her hands were clasped together in her lap,
and with her large lustrous eyes she was gazing anxiously into my face.

No Arab tent was this sumptuous apartment, and I marveled much as to where I was.
"You are not dead, oh, Frank!" the girl cried, her voice low and musical.
"No, I believe not," I answered, "although at the first sight of you I was inclined to believe that I was and had come straight to Paradise."

She laughed; woman-like, she was not averse to flattery.
"Oh, no," she replied, "you are still on earth and in great danger. Do you know where you are?"

"I do not," I answered. "The Arabs are to blame for my wounded arm and my present disabled condition; but this is not an Arab tent."

"No; you are in Boxrah, in the house of Pasha Ali Jih."

I could not repress an exclamation of astonishment. When we had passed through Boxrah Cohen had told me that the pasha of the town was a most inveterate old scoundrel, and was suspected of being in league with the robbers of the desert.

"It is he that instigated the attack on the caravan, and he caused you to be brought here because he learned that you are a rich Frank, and he thinks that your friends will pay a large ransom for you."

I thought that it was best not to deny this pleasant fiction, for the old scoundrel of a pasha would be apt to injure the goose that he believed would lay golden eggs for him, but I expressed my surprise that the pasha of a Turkish town should dare allow himself to be mixed up with a gang of robbers.

"Ah, but he is a cunning old wretch; he will not let any one know that you are here. He will send word to your friends that you are in the hands of the Arabs, and that he will negotiate with them to release you. He is a vile old wretch—my husband!"

I was rather astonished at this admission, made in perfect sincerity, but I held my peace.

"I am his wife!" she continued, her lip curling in scorn. "his tenth wife; he bought me of my father who was greedy enough to sell me to this old dog. But, I am a true child of the desert, and the pasha has never even dared to lay his hand upon me since I came here. He knows that I wear a dagger and that I am not afraid to use it. He trusts that in time I will be content, and so lets me do about as I like, but I will never be content with him; I want a Frank for a husband."

This was rather a strong declaration, and under the peculiar circumstances I felt a little embarrassed; but this child of nature never took the least notice of my hesitation, but proceeded coolly on in her speech:



An Arab Angel, and no mistake.

"My new mistress?" he queried, puzzling himself to make out her meaning.
"Yes; with Miss Myra Wainwright. She is mistress here, now, is she not? Tell her that a person who knows how to tell fortunes wants to tell hers."

"I don't think she'll take up with such foolishness, old woman. Come in, but I shan't leave you a-standing here, when I don't know what you may be after. Tummus! Here, Tummus, you boy, stand 'ere and watch the old witch while I tell our young lady as she presents her compliments and would request the pleasure of a sojournance with her."

The woman's keen black eyes flashed a look at the footman; then turning to the boy she remarked, with a grim smile:

"Ay, watch me close, little one; I might carry off one of these statues, or the newel-post, if you don't have a care!"

But, the footman did not have to leave Tummus long in charge; the new mistress was sitting down the stairs to sit a little while in the drawing-room before dinner.

The keen, searching eyes of the woman were fixed upon her as she floated down—small, airy, graceful. In the house Myra did not think it necessary to wear heavy mourning. She was expecting Mr. Garwell that evening, and she had made herself as pretty as possible, by dressing in white, with only black ribbons and jewelry to show that she was in mourning.

Her fair skin and flaxen hair were set off to their best advantage by this dress. She looked more like a child than a girl of twenty-two, as she came flitting down with a fairy motion, almost as if she had wings.

She stopped at the foot of the stair and looked inquiringly from the servant to the intruder. Not for an instant did the piercing eyes of the stranger leave her face.

"I beg your pardon, miss," said the man, "she would come in. She says she wants to tell your fortune, miss, and I was coming to see you about it."

"You'd better take her down to Norah and Peggy. Bribes."

"No, my lady, it is you that I have come to tell a fine fortune to," spoke up the woman, advancing quite near to the young lady. "I'm a Cuban, lady, and I'm said to have a gift. I can tell many things in the future; I never fail."

Now Myra was not without a spice of superstition in her nature. She was secretly much troubled, also, with doubts whether the wonderful good fortune that had come to her would stay; she dwelt much, mentally, on her cousin's probable endeavors to break the will; she wanted to know, too, what her chances were with John Garwell, she was idle, and reflected that she might amuse herself until dinner with this old hag. Ethel was in her own room; she could have an interview with the fortune-teller without being ridiculed by any one; so she finally said:

"Well, come in here with me. Let me see, now, how much you know about the future," and, half-laughing, she led the way into a charming boudoir beyond the two drawing-rooms.

A MESSAGE.

BY E. Z. WAY.

You only half-promised me, brownie,
When on your tips trembled adieu,
To press from life's roses the honey
So precious to him and to you.

Your maidenly coyness was pretty;
Your eyes they were tender and deep,
And that still deep glow of the pity
That shadowed the secret you'd keep.

You said: "I'll be sisterly—loving,
And gracious as sister can prove;
I'll give him all trust worth bestowing—
But not that one proof of my love."

And so, what was yours for the choosing
Of affection strong, lasting and true—
Too precious one day, he losing
Is lost to him and to you!"

Is your life so filled up with blisses,
Dear brownie, that you can say nay
To him you know such as his is—
To love no less car usay!

Oh, beautiful sophist! no longer
Clasp the dull chain round you cast!
And, proud in your grace, grow the stronger,
To own yourself conquered at last!

Madcap,

The Little Quakeress;

OR,

THE NAVAL CADET'S WOOLING.

A Romance of the Best Society of the Penn City.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN.

AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," "WAR OF HEARTS," "BRAVE BARBARA," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

FORTUNE-TELLING.

MEANTIME the beggar to whom he had given alms with a recommendation to her to seek some place of shelter immediately, seemed in no hurry to get out of the cold and coming darkness; she continued to sit where she was, pretty thoroughly protected by her thick shawl, drawn over head and ears, until the lamplight set the gas to blazing in a lamp in front of her; then she arose and crawled up to the door, ringing the bell.

"Why don't you go to the basement door?" asked the servant, sharply, on seeing only an old beggar-woman before him.

"Because I have business with your new mistress," she answered, quite unmoved by his dignity.

The stranger closed the door and Myra seated herself in a blue-satin-and-gilt chair, in an indolent attitude.

"Describe my future husband, please," she said, perky.

"He is tall, slender, dark—brown hair, gray eyes—a little under thirty years old. He has a scar on his left hand made by the bite of a horse; he is fond of horses," the woman went on, slowly, holding the tiny hand of the girl, with the palm open to her inspection.

"You have seen him?" cried Myra, blushing brightly.

"Yes," said the stranger, now holding Myra's hand firmly in her strong clasp. "I have seen John Garwell. I did not come here to practice upon you the tricks of a Gipsy. I came to you, Myra Wainwright, because I am the possessor of a secret which you would almost give this hand to know. Can any one hear us?" looking about her.

"No, I think not. My cousin is up-stairs—the servants at their dinner. We can speak low," answered Myra, speaking eagerly.

With natural quickness she had connected the assertion of the woman that she was a Cuban with some secret which should bear upon the mystery of Ethel's birth. What could this dark, poor-looking creature tell her? Was she in danger of losing all? Was she to be confirmed in her possessions? Cool as the young lady was by habit, she felt her color come and go—her heart throbbed loudly against her side.

I can assure you that which you have already, and I can fix your title to money and estates in Cuba which will more than double your present wealth."

"How?" asked Myra, under her breath.

"That is my secret. It is a secret for which you will have to pay me well—well, liberally, extravagantly! But then you will be able to pay me well. All I ask is a thousand dollars now, and one-tenth—reflect, what a trifle, one-tenth!—of the property which I shall make it in your power to claim."

"That might prove to be a large sum!"

"Ay, but your portion will be nine times larger. Let me tell you first, Myra Wainwright, that I have come to you first, for a reason of my own; but that, if I am dissatisfied with you or your liberality, there remains your cousin Ethel, with whom I can treat."

"But you cannot give her what is mine?"

"Ay, is it yours? Do no doubts trouble you? Are there none to labor in your cousin's cause?"

"I am not gossyping you," asserted Myra, beginning to tremble. "I am willing to accept your terms, as soon as you prove to me your right to make them."

The woman again glanced about the room, went to the two doors—each of which closed behind soft blue draperies so as to appear part of the wall—dropped off her ugly shawl and stood before the heiress looking quite another

pretended fortune-teller could bring such a rich color to the fair cheek and such a smile about the pink mouth, and glitter to the large blue eyes that almost seemed to wish to avoid her own because they knew they were too bright.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY LADY PATRONNESS.

THAT first interview of Myra with the Cuban woman was not the last. Several more followed, not at the house, however; and then the Cuban left Philadelphia to return to her native island. Myra had drawn so liberally of money at the bank that every one wondered what she could do with it.

But the woman, who took two thousand dollars in gold back to Cuba, could have answered that question better than any one else.

A new spirit pervaded the home of the Wainwrights. Myra developed a new character so rapidly that even those who suspected her latent qualities were astonished.

The meek, quiet, deprecating little creature became haughty and insolent. The old servants, who had been, some of them, years in the family, were given notice to leave. Others filled their places. Whereas, in the past, one waiting-maid had sufficed both girls, Myra now had a maid exclusively to attend upon her; and a hard time the girl had of it trying to please a mistress as capricious as she was unfeeling.

But this servant, for some reason, chose to remain with her. She was a young person who had presented herself in answer to an advertisement; a Frenchwoman, by birth, she was represented to be, in the reference which she brought, but speaking English quite well; bright and pleasant in her manners, neat in her dress, with a really pretty face laughing out from under her white cap. She was so tasteful in the arrangement of her young lady's hair, and could tell so much better than mademoiselle herself what became her most-giving a richness and tone to the flaxen hair and small features which they never before possessed—that Myra was anxious to keep her, while, at the same time, she made the girl the victim of numberless petty persecutions.

Though in mourning, and paying outward deference to her uncle's memory, Myra indulged in every pleasure allowable, and waited with burning impatience for the first six months of mourning to pass, so that she might be free to launch out into the full tide of gay society.

Every day her manner toward her cousin grew more indifferent and more patronizing. Ethel felt that insolent manner most keenly. She had lost father, lover, fortune; she now had to bear this assumption of superiority on the part of this girl whom she had loved and cherished as a sister when Myra was penniless and friendless.

Ethel tried bravely to endure this daily torture, as she bore her other sufferings, silently and sadly.

But she felt a burning indignation which almost prompted her to leave the house forever when Myra, between Christmas and New Year's, changed the furniture of the mansion as she had changed the servants. The massive, but elegant and appropriate furniture, chosen by her uncle's taste, was sent to the auction-rooms, and in its place, came sumptuous things, as if Myra had been the "Queen of France," for whom nothing was too luxurious.

Yet no one had the power to interfere. The will had been admitted to probate—Ethel not contesting—and Myra being of age, there was no one with the right to check her extravagance. She acted as if the five hundred thousand dollars of her uncle's estate were five millions. No one, save herself, knew what the Cuban had revealed to her; or some clew might have been had to her senseless expenditure.

Ethel looked on in indignation and dismay. Everything prospered with little Myra. Everything which went to make up the sum of Ethel's trouble went to her aggrandizement. Yes! she had even won John Garwell to be her lover, before the first day of the New Year!

Circumstance, that "unspiritual God," had favored her in that desire of her heart, as in everything else.

For a terrible misfortune had overtaken that other house in Walnut street, of whose inmates we know something.

A few days before Christmas Coralie Clyde had kissed her aunt a laughing good-bye for an hour, having been recommended to cease fumbling over the lace ruchings of her wedding-dress and to run out for a breath of air and a brisk walk.

Aunt Priscilla had seen with regret—and perhaps a tinge of remorse—that the smooth cheeks of her niece were growing less round and far more white, as the early day set for her marriage with the man of their choice approached.

The anxious aunt had sought to quiet her own conscience by a lavish expenditure of money on the coming event. Coralie had every pretty article purchased for her which she could be coaxed to say she admired. The old ladies had new dove-colored satins, of so solid a texture that they would "stand alone," in preparation to be worn at the ceremony. There was a diadem of pearls in course of construction at Bailey's, which was to be worn on those wayward, dancing curls along with the bridal veil, and in union with the lovely necklace which they had previously given her. Nothing was spared that would please their darling. Many gay things, not approved by the Friends, found their way into the sober, highly respectable dwelling.

But Coralie smiled less day by day; and she shrank from the visits of the bridegroom-elect in a strange way which kept her aunts more uneasy than they cared to confess.

And on this cold and blustering December day, when, seeing how white and still she was, they advised a brisk walk, she went very unwillingly to take it; and either some fearful accident happened to her or she forgot to come back.

Most people considered it a case of abduction or murder. She was almost a child in years, innocent, and perilously beautiful. Some wretch or wretches must have dogged her steps and watched her ruthlessly away from her life of joy and beauty—from loving arms and worshipping lover—from the bridal jewels and the bridal feast.

The whole city was startled.

The Misses Featherlight, mercifully for them, did not believe in their secret thoughts that Coralie had been abducted; but they allowed others to think they did.

Almost as dreadful, it seemed to them, was the thing they suspected—that she had run away to be married to that penniless and nameless youth to whom she had avowed she was "engaged." There was in such a course—their thought, in their pride—a more bitter disgrace than to meet her fate at the hands of ruffians.

Coverly they employed a detective, who, ascertained for them that Bertram Leigh, cadet, had actually sailed in the Mohawk, as he had said he should do—that the ship was still far south on her coasting expedition—that young Leigh was still on board of her—had not left her except with one for a night or a day at some port—that, most certainly, Coralie had not gone to him.

After that, a horrible fear that something murderous had happened to the child, made the aunts wretched. The more so as time wore on, and they gained no tidings.

Many a time that winter did those poor old ladies go to view the dead and swollen body of some woman "found drowned"—some young creature who might lately have been as pretty and as innocent as Coralie. Their sorrow would have been most pitiful had they not brought it on their own heads by the effort they had made to sacrifice the girl on the wide altar of Mammon and Pride.

One man in the great city, when he read in his morning paper, the first day after, of the mysterious disappearance, firmly believed that he had seen the missing girl and followed her some distance on her way. This was Webster Evelyn, who had noticed the strange expression in the eyes of a young girl, and had followed her to the bridge.

"Fool that I was!" he said to himself, with a

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SURVEYORS' CAMP.

"Yes, Kite," said Old Arkansas, as he and Kit Bandy made their way back from the river into the woods, "that wife of yours is a treasure—a genuine one. What woman ever born 'd a thought of makin' a canoe out of her armbrill, and sailin' out across a roarin' river?"

"Oh, yes; she's a jewel in your eye, Arkansas," said Old Arkansas, "but she's a red-hot skillet flapped over your head or a tater-masher driven into your diaphragm as often as I have, you couldn't see anything smart in the old catapully that done the violence. Oh, I honestly wish the Ingins'd skulp her, dash her old pickers; but instead of that she's actin' pumper up and courted by that old rip of a White Crane. He's even promised her the position of queen if she'd give up the white people, hotly, and lay down the queen she'd make! Knock the socks off Queen Victory of France. She's a doctor, and that's what makes the Ingins like her. She really does know somethin' 'bout pills and such, and has brought more'n one buck Ingins out of the kinks a-flyin'. Oh, she's a sort of a goddess, and a free character 'mong them, and a laydoggin of friends. But she can't stand it always. She'll flap her heel ag'in the bucket some of these days, and then she'll call on Peter at the gates of Paradise."

"Ah! you swear she'll be an angel, do you?"

"She'll go through it if she takes a notion in spite of the doorknocker's club. She's a wif of her own, has Sabina, and alers makes a way; and I reckon she'll follow me upon earth and off."

"If she follows you, Kite, after you leave this hemisfer, she'll catch blue-blazes, nov mind."

"She'll follow if she takes a notion, brimstone or no brimstone; but mebbe the devil and I both can head her off. But, lookee here, Arkie, suppose you and me visit that surveying party's camp and see what they're doin'. Somewhere 'r other I can't reconnoiter myself to Surveyor Braash and Scientific Daymon. That's plenty of royal ole scoundness crappin' out of their eyes; but, arter all, everybody ar'n't villains because they're not as handsome and lovely and sweet-spirited as you and me, Arkie. Do you know that?"

"That's so, Kite; but that's Silver Star that we must look arter, too; and, also, that dasted young feller with the sparryhawk cap and feather jacket. He's got that gal Elwe, 'bout which Silver Star talked so much; and, for some reason or other, he's threatened the life of the Boy Knight. I've an idea sneak in under my skulp, Kit, that that Sparryhawk's not the clear quill."

"D'ye think so, Arkansas? Why? State yer reason, will ye?"

"On account of his mysterious comin' and goin'. Now none of us knows a danged thing 'bout where he belongs; and I've heard it loudly hinted that he's the leader of a gang of robbers, and that his handle is Osman, the Outlaw."

"Great horn that pulled old Jericho! D'ye think that's a shadder of truth in it, Arkie?"

"Couldn't be, Kite; but that's my own suspicion's what hinted it to me. A mule's heel's not always stationary when the mule's asleep, Kit Bandy; so keep that in your pipe."

Thus conversing the two old bordermen pushed on through the forest in the direction of the surveyors' camp, and in the course of a few hours they came in sight of the place. It was located in a natural defensive position, and commanded a view in all directions. It was situated upon a high hill or knoll sloping off in all directions. The sides of this knoll were barren of vegetation, smooth and covered with a sandy soil; but upon its crest grew a little clump of trees and in among these the surveyors had pitched their camp.

Without any hesitation Old Arkansas and Kit Bandy ascended the hill and entered the camp where they were met by Surveyor Braash and his men.

The scouts took in the camp at a glance. There were about fifteen men of different nationalities, and some of forbidding looks, in the party. All were armed to the teeth and looked as though they would as soon fight as eat. A wagon of the heavy military pattern, four draught mules and some twenty fine-looking saddle-horses and equipments comprised their outfit. As evidence of their business, there lay at one side a surveyor's staff, a compass, a theodolite, a Gunter's chain and pins, a flag-pole and other things pertaining to a first-class outfit of a surveying party.

"I am glad to meet you again, gentlemen," said Herman Braash, "and hope you will accept of the hospitality of our camp as long as you feel so disposed."

"Thank you, strangers," replied Bandy; "we're great guns for fun and good eatin'. We may, and we may not stay here awhile with you—jist owin' to the weather."

"I desire, gentlemen," said Professor Daymon, "to secure the assistance of one of you a few minutes in helping me make up the topography of this country. Whichever is the best acquainted with this vicinity will please step into my tent."

Kit Bandy motioned to Arkansas to go with him, so the old scout followed him into the tent. The first thing the professor did was to take from an innocent-looking camp-chest a bottle of liquor and a small goblet and invite Arkansas to drink. The old man touched the liquor lightly, and Daymon, after drinking himself, took a small, portable secretary from his chest and opening it drew a well-dressed map of the White River country therefrom. This he spread out before Arkansas, and then said:

"I presume you can read and write, can you, Arkansas?"

"Sorry to say, professor, that I can't know 'B' from bull's 'E' used to have a hang of the letters, but as it alers seemed a waste of the raw material to be thinkin' 'em over, I let 'em slip and filled up my noggin with some good, useful reseats for burns, curin' pelties and such."

"Well, I don't know as the want of a knowledge of the alphabet will hinder you giving me just as much information as though you had the learning of Humboldt. This map, now, embraces this country so far as the geographical dimensions are concerned; but many of the prominent features of the region are not indicated by location, and as we have to make a complete report, even to minute details, we must have the information to make it upon. To travel the country over would require much time and labor, and so we decided to call some one already acquainted with the lay of the land, as the saying goes."

"Yes, yes," said Arkansas, gazing upon the map; "but what river's that, professor?" he said, pointing to a red line running north and south across the map.

"That's not a river, but an isothermal line," Arkansas explained, the professor smiling at the old man's childish ignorance; "but now, let us commence at the Sioux village and follow east down the river; what are the general features of the country?"

"Wal, professor, I'm not very handy in makin' geography, but then I'll tackle it best I know how. Arzen leavin' the Sioux village the country, for a ways, is level and lightly timbered, but after it gets into the vicinity of the Spirit Swamp it's tumbled up wuss than a trundle-bed, and kivered with stunted pines and grubs, till ye can't rest. Then comes the Spirit Swamp—a nasty dismal hole, put her down, professor. That's more'n five hundred acres of it, and nothin' but reeds and willers, and frogs grow and ripen there."

"Is it accessible by foot or by canoe?" asked the professor.

"They say it's navigable for canoes, tho' I can't say sure enough for gografy. You see the swamp backs up against the north side of the river; put it down, professor; and a canoe could enter it from the White Earth. But as it's said to be the abode of spirits and goblins, put it down, professor; that Old Arkansas Abe, who's not afeard to face death and destruction, could not be hired to enter it in broad daylight."

"Then you have never explored the swamp?" asked Daymon.

"Explored it? Heavens, I'd as soon think of explorin' purgatory. Why, professor, when I pass along the river whar the Spirit buckles on to her, I feel cold and chokish. It seems as though the wind is always blowin' over the swamp, and such a roar as them reeds make—why, it's as if it would make the ha'r raise on a dead nigger's head. Oh, a dasted bad pill is the Spirit Swamp; put her down, professor."

For fully an hour Arkansas continued his description of the country, and when Daymon had obtained all the information of this character desired, he turned the conversation upon other topics. The weather, the hunting, the Indians—all were fully discussed; and finally Daymon remarked, incidentally:

"We were all wonderfully worked up the other night, when encamped south of here, by the appearance of a dark spot against the clear sky. Many were the conjectures as to what it was, but none was right, for it proved to be a balloon. It was going north, and appeared to be settling toward the earth; but what become of it I know not."

"That was the night of the twenty-first, wasn't it?" asked Old Arkansas.

"Let me see," said the professor, reflectively. "I believe it was—yes, it was the night of the twenty-first; I remember now. Did you see it?"

"No, but Silver Star, the Boy Knight of the Peraro, did, and that's not all. The balloon was nighly down when he seed it, and he heard the ballooners quarrelin' like man and wif 'mong themselves 'bout somethin', and presently he saw a bundle let down from the balloon with a rope. Then up went the air-boat, and the feller that started to quarrel ag'in, and presently the boy saw somethin'—well, it was a man—thrust out of the balloon and come screamin' down through the air, and strikin' the ground, was mashed into a lump of red liver. And that bundle, professor, turned out to be the sweetest little gal—so Silver Star said—you ever seed it?"

"Good heavens! do you believe it, Arkansas?"

"Yes; Silver wouldn't lie."

"What become of the girl?"

"Well, Silver took charge of her—put her on his horse and started to the fort; but the Ingins got after 'em and he sent her on to the fort, and he dodged off afoot. But alas! the boss come through all hunky, but that was no gal on his back."

"You don't tell!" exclaimed the professor; "then Silver Star doesn't know anything about her?"

"No, I know he don't."

"Do you have any idea where she is, Arkansas?"

"If you can find the den of one Sparryhawk, a young trapper, or hunter or somethin', I think you'll find the gal there. I heard him tell a person so, and—"

At this juncture Arkansas caught the eye of Kit Bandy who was standing near, and who gave the scout a look that expressed more than words could have said. However, to get around an abrupt break in his honest revelation of facts, he went right on.

"But that Sparryhawk is a crazy loon that imagines himself lord of creation and cock of the foddler-ward. My opinion is, that the gal over among the hills, and the balloon's leader's Mother Eve, professor."

"Very likely," replied Daymon, making an entry in his diary.

The two conversed a few minutes longer, then rose and went out, when a general running conversation ensued. From early Daymon and Braash left camp in opposite directions, but managed to get together on the south side of the grove. But of these movements Bandy and Arkansas appeared to take no notice.

Kit walked about camp examining, with a childish curiosity, the surveying instruments and outfit, and finally he strolled off toward the north side of the knoll, and took a look at the country beyond. Over among the wooded hills he saw a smoke rising as from a camp, and it filled his mind with no little wonder and curiosity.

While pondering the matter over he heard a slight, fluttering sound at his right, and looking around he discovered a red flag attached to a bush flapping in the wind. And he had no sooner discovered this than he saw a horseman emerge from the woods in a line with the smoke over among the hills, and he made toward him. It did not require a second glance to tell him that it was an Indian, and as he came nearer, Kit saw, to his surprise, that it was a Blackfoot chief.

"Wal, now, what's brought the Blackfeet away down hereabouts?" the old man mused.

"Horn of Joshua! if the Si-oxes git wind of it, they'll bounce 'em like ducks would a June-bug. And the bugger is comin' right smack up this way. Who knows?"

The sound of footsteps cut short his soliloquy, and turning he saw Professor Daymon approaching.

"Perfesser," he said, pointing toward the Indian, "what does that mean? Can you explain it?"

"By gracious! it's an Indian, isn't it?" exclaimed Daymon.

"Yes, a Blackfoot chief," responded Bandy, eying Daymon.

"Well, he mustn't enter our camp," said Daymon, "and count our force, or he might give us trouble. I will go out and meet him, and find out what he's after."

Daymon advanced from the thicket and moved down the knoll until he met the Indian. The latter dismounted and the two held a long conversation, keeping the horse between them and Kit. Finally the chief mounted and rode back toward the woods; and as the professor approached Bandy, he said:

"I coaxed the vagrant and cutthroat to go back for fear the boys would raise his hair."

"What's the Blackfeet doin' down here, two or three hundred miles off of their own latitude?"

"He says a few of them came down to hunt buffalo, but I don't believe him. I think they're looking up Sioux scalps."

"Neither do I," responded Kit, in a tone that caused the professor to look up as if in doubt as to what he meant.

The two returned to camp, talking as they went.

Dinner was soon announced by a strapping big negro cook.

Upon invitation, Kit and Arkansas broke bread with the surveyors.

After the repast was over the old scouts concluded to take their departure, and as they were not urged to stay, they had no difficulty in getting away.

When out in the woods, Old Arkansas asked:

"Well, Kite, my posey, what do you think of the surveyors?"

"Not quite as much as you do, for I didn't tell 'em everything I knowed, and gussat what I didn't know, as I heard you doin'. Oh, by the time you've served a term or two of married life you'll be a leetle more keertful how you shoot off the lip of you."

"Don't you think they're surveyors, Kite? Haven't they got their compass, and chains, and flag-poles, and kind wares, and good treatment, and all sich? humph! say, Kite!"

"Yes, and didn't Judas have a kiss for our Savior when he betrayed Him? humph! say, Arkansas?"

"Oh, well, if yer goin' to quatin' Skriptor and usin' of metaphysics, I ar'n't thar. Ka-ris-topher. My book-larin's not very plentiful, and so if ye want to run with me, you've got to talk solid sense right me. Oh, I can fetch one, Kite, that can hold you level on the talk till the cows come home—that can read and talk on any subject from matrimony to a Babylonian inscription."

"Your confidant, Professor Daymon, eh?"

"No, that old honey-mug of yours, Sabina Bandy."

"Oh, Arkansas! you're a fiend—you delight in torturin' me—you're second cousin to Old Satan."

"Thanks for the rose-tinted compliment,

Kite; but all jokin' aside, I struck a lead in Skinfintic Daymon's tent by stretchin' the blanket a leetle and bein' communicative."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir; he took out a map of these diggin's and asked me if I could read. I told him no, and then he showed me the map. The first thing that rested my 'tention was a red line runnin' north and south across the map, and says he, snailin', 'It's not a river, but an isothermal line,' or some sich a name. But right thar, Bandy, is whar the little eddication, that I had mauled into me at the Brimstone Holler school-house, come into play. Right along that red line it said 'Horn of Joshua!'"

"Horn of Joshua?"

"Yes, sir; that's what she said, Bandy, and it's my solemn opinion that Skinfintic Daymon's the man that run that balloon that Silver Star got the gal out of. He talked about the balloon—said they all seed 'er pass over 'em; but somehow 'r other I couldn't swallow all he said after he lied 'bout that icythermule line. Now how's that, Adonis of beauty?"

"Wal, that's been my opinion, all along, of them. They may be government surveyors, and all that, but that doesn't hinder 'em from bein' rascals. Government has lots of sich servants," said Kit.

"Wal, I mean to look around that Blackfoot camp, and keep an eye open," declared Arkansas.

Second the motion, Arkansas, for I think thar's a chance for hydrogins of an atarxi this and to-morry night. Thar's a nigger in the wood-pile, somewhere."

"The first I do 'll be to reconnoiter that Blackfoot camp when night comes, and see what relation it bears to the surveyors' camp; and if thar isn't some skulps to be hid, and it might be sich a thing that Silver Star's in their clutches."

"Well, while you're doin' the Blackfoot camp, I'll run up and interview the Si-ox horl-nest."

"Hate to lose your camp, Ka-ris-topher."

"I'll meet you round these diggin's in a day or two—mebbe sooner. You may expect me down on you at any moment."

The two old bordermen parted, Bandy going west, and Arkansas, by a circuitous route, going in the direction of the Blackfoot camp. The latter did not hurry, for it was some time until night, and darkness was necessary for a successful reconnoissance.

When night at length came, he pushed forward and soon came in sight of the camp. A dim camp-fire marked its location, and with the stealth of a shadow he crept toward it until he had gained a point where he could command a good view of the place. He counted not less than thirty Blackfoot warriors and two white men in the direction of the Blackfoot camp. The latter did not hurry, for it was some time until night, and darkness was necessary for a successful reconnoissance.

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He saw that the Indians were making preparations for breaking camp, and that the white men were directing their movements and assisting in the packing of the goods. The latter did not hurry, for it was some time until night, and darkness was necessary for a successful reconnoissance.

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ward the river, and flung its red beams across the water against the black wall of the forest trees. It shone full upon the old man's face with a white, garish light.

"Great Jehovah!" he finally exclaimed: "I do wonder if Silver Star and Sparryhawk'll git roasted in that lake of fire! Mighty Moses! that is a grand, awful and—"

He felt something touch his belt, and looking around, he saw a great bony hand lift his knife and revolver from his belt from behind. A cry burst from his lips, and turning quickly, he found himself face to face with the Sioux chief, White Crane.

Silent as a shadow had the renegade approached and taken the weapons from Arkansas's girdle, while he stood awe-stricken by the fiery spectacle before him. But the instant their eyes met, the old scout's fist was aimed, with lightning quickness at the face of the chief; but the latter was on his guard, and warding the blow, he clenched with his white foe.

And together the two went down in a hand-to-hand struggle—locked in each other's embrace like maddened tigers.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 410.)

Work and Play.

TABLE-COVERS, ETC.

EMMA S. For your sitting-room table-cover, sewing-machine rug and sewing-chair cover, get heavy gray flannel. Line the table-cover with some soft-colored goods and quilt in diamonds upon the machine with scarlet, blue, orange, or any bright-colored silk that will match the color you wish to introduce into the border. The border is formed of a wide strip of gray flannel pinked on each edge, a narrower strip of gray flannel pinked on each edge laid upon that and stitched on close to the pinking with the gay silk. Then embroidery stitches in the narrow strip with fancy embroidery stitches in floss. Worsted fringe or a tiny pinked edge of the gray flannel forms the edge. The sewing-machine rug is made in the same way, and lined with cloth to make it stay in place. It should be large enough to protect the carpet from oil and threads. If your sewing-chair is wooden, or cane, make a long strip of the two flannels, finishing the short ends with fringe, and throw this strip over the back of the chair, having it long enough to come over the front of the seat. If your chair is a stuffed one, cover it to match the table-cover and rug.

FLOOR COMFORTS.

JENNIE. It really is much better to have bed-room floors painted or stained to imitate dark wood, with rugs placed before the bed, bureau, washstand, etc., than to have carpets. The rugs can be taken up weekly and be thoroughly aired and the floors washed; thus the sleeping-room, which should be the healthiest of all apartments, is kept sweet and cool. Elegant rugs may be made by cutting waste pieces of Brussels carpet into strips an inch and a half wide; ravel out the yarn and sew it in tufts to a piece of strong kitchen toweling the size you wish to make your rug. Have about an inch between the rows of tufts. Line the rug and put a fringe about it.

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THAT EARLY MUSTACHE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

What tongue can tell the joys that fill
The heart of the young man Jack
When heath his nose the first fuzz shows
Foretelling a mustache!

He's prouder than the richest man
Could be with heaps of cash
Over that brown first fuzz of down—
That ghost of a mustache.

Some day the girls will praise its curls.
Oh, frost, be not too rash,
And touch one hair of promise there
And spoil that dear mustache!

A looking-glass he cannot pass,
For light and dark he looks to mark
The growth of that mustache.

How very slow it seems to grow!
And should you call it trash,
Or speak of it with touch of wit,
He'll fight for that mustache.

Ask if that's dirt, and he'll feel hurt,
And both his eyes will flash;
The yield, indeed, shows but scant seed
Planted for that mustache!

He drinks cold tea for fear that he
Might scald and bring to smash
That little crop upon his lip.
He calls "his dear mustache."

He longs to see the time when he
Can twist it in a lash
And lay it there across his ear—
The prized, loved mustache.

It never lacks for brush and wax,
For this he spends some cash.
But horrors, hark, how slow it grows!
Waxes that dear mustache!

Pride of his heart! The barber's art
Is now invoked by Dash
To cultivate and irrigate
That fungus-like mustache.

The barber smiles and puts on oils—
Dyes warranted to wash
And with many an ointment doth anoint
That delicate mustache.

And though this youth, in very truth,
Is large from eating hash,
'Tis plain to see how much he
Wrapped up in that mustache!

Post and Plain;

Rifle and Revolver in the Buffalo Range.

BY LAUNCE POYNTEZ.

II.

HOW TO SHOOT A PISTOL.

WHEN we stepped outside on the parade-ground of the fort, we found that the snow had melted, while the wind was blowing from a different quarter. The heavy gray clouds were scudding across the sky, low down, and the western horizon showed some patches of blue.

"We shall have a regular nipper to-morrow," announced Bullard. "A north-south wind on the plains is no joke, I tell you. The thermometer will be down to ten below zero, at least. Later in the season it will sink to forty."

"And how do you manage to keep warm?" asked Moore.

"Oh, it never blows hard when we're down at forty. I'd sooner have a still day with forty degrees than a north-west with ten. We'll not borrow trouble if we can help it."

We passed across the parade-ground, which was now dotted with figures. The men were coming out of their quarters and beginning to snowball each other, while officers were strolling from one house to another. We noticed that in the garrison every one wore some sort of uniform, and that the blue great-coats were universal.

We made our way toward the stables, along a path which had already been made by the garrison snow-plows. On the way we passed several officers, and in each case we had to stop and be introduced all round, a ceremony conducted with a great deal of bowing and hat-lifting, for officers of the army are above all things polite. Two or three joined us when they heard where we were going, and we soon reached the garrison practice-ground.

This lay in rear of the long rows of stalls that composed the cavalry stables, and it proved to be a corral, which had lately been occupied by cattle and horses. Bruce told us it was the exercising-ground for the morning gallop of the horses.

It had been agreed beforehand that Captain Bullard, who had the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in the garrison, was to instruct those of us who were deficient, and Miles—Bruce's orderly—followed us with a heavy box of ammunition.

"Now, gentlemen," said the captain, as we stopped before a board target about six feet square. "I suppose you all know that there are two distinct kinds of pistol-shooting. We do the one with a big pistol and a long cartridge, anywhere from fifty to a hundred and fifty yards, and it's just the same as rifle-work. You have to bring your sights on a line and hold them there, being careful not to pull off. Miles, go and nail up a target."

Miles went to the board fence and nailed up a paper target just like those we had used at Littleton for shot-gun practice.

"Now, gentlemen, fire away," ordered Bullard. "One shot apiece; and I'll bet a dollar no one makes a bull's-eye at fifty yards."

This proved quite correct. The two-inch circle of black which formed the bull's-eye was nothing but a black speck at fifty yards.

Moore was the first to fire, taking his now, deliberate aim at arm's length. Miles, who stood near the target in a pit, put out a long pointer and marked the shot in the paper, just at the top edge.

Charley Green followed, and got on the target a little nearer. Old Mart then advanced and put in a bullet within some three inches of the bull, and the rest of us had about the same luck, all on the target, but none nearer the bull than four or six inches, while most of us were at the edge of the paper.

Then Bullard began to speak:

"You see, gentlemen, yonder is a two-foot target, covering more space than the vitals of any man in this crowd. If you can't hit a twenty-inch circle every time, you can't drop a man except by a chance shot. I notice you all shoot the same way, at arm's length. That's all very well for quick shots at short range, but it won't do for accuracy. Look here."

He was standing with his left side toward the target as he spoke, the pistol dangling loosely in his right. We heard the click of the locks, and the next moment Bullard threw up his left elbow as high as his face, resting the thumb and fingers of his open left hand on his breast. Up came his pistol hand, and the barrel of the weapon rested on the raised elbow of the marksman. Hardly taking any aim he fired, and Miles's pointer came out of the pit and rested just under the bull's eye.

"I didn't expect to hit the bull that time," said Bullard. "I was only showing you how to aim quickly and accurately. You see it took me less than three seconds to fire, and it came nearer the bull than any of you gentlemen, who aimed slowly and deliberately. Some of you took nearly half a minute to fire. Hold your breath when you fire. You will find your front sight almost on the mark. Aim correctly. See!"

As he spoke, he fired; and Miles showed the white disk over the bull's-eye for the first time that day.

That's the whole secret of accurate shooting

with the pistol at long range," said Bullard. "Treat it as a rifle, and get all the rest you can."

We very soon found the benefit of his advice, and our shots began to cluster round the bull's-eye in close proximity. Jack Moore and old Mart, who were both good rifle-shots already, as we knew, made bull's-eyes, and the greenest of us found very little trouble in sighting correctly over the rest made by the left elbow. Before another round could be fired it became necessary to change the target, as the holes could no longer be distinguished apart. By the time it was dark we had satisfied ourselves that we could shoot straight with a pistol, and went back to our quarters with great content.

Bullard had promised to show us what he meant by "quick shooting," that evening, and invited our party into the cellar of his quarters for the purpose.

"These heavy cartridges," he explained, "go so strong, and send a bullet so far, that it's not safe to practice above ground, unless there's a dead plain and no people behind the target, or else a bank to hold the balls. I've got a target made on purpose, and I'll show you how to shoot without danger."

The cellar of the captain's quarters proved to be large and deep, the walls being at least eight feet high. At one end of this cellar was a short tunnel, about six feet square, boarded in at the sides and ending in a clay-bank, with no wall to support it.

"There, gentlemen," said Bullard; "that little gallery cost me about twenty dollars, for mason work to arch the entrance, for boarding on the sides and putting in an iron plate above. No more shot can hurt any one. It's bound to go into the dirt. Now please observe this target. It is made of a thick plate of steel and rings like a bell. It is just six inches square. If you hit it, you will hear the sound. If you miss it, the bank will take all you shoot in silence."

"But how are we to find our misses?" asked Moore.

"You don't want any misses. This kind of shooting is different from the other. You have only to hit six-inch target from a distance of twenty or thirty feet at the utmost. You can begin at six feet if you like, and be sure to hit every time, moving back till you get the hang of it."

"And what if the pistol shoots over?" queried Charley Green.

"It will not 'shoot over,' as you call it. You are not to look at the sights at all."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I'll show you. In the first place, remember that this practice is for firing rapidly from a galloping horse at a galloping buffalo. You've no time to look at sights, and could not keep them steady if you had. You must point the pistol so that the barrel goes straight at the mark; the bullet is sure to go straight, too. You have to learn just how to grasp the stock, so that your barrel will point directly at the object. You can point your finger or a stick at anything, straight enough. Nothing will teach you but practice. See, I don't use one pistol; I know the grip of it. Observe."

There was but one dim candle in the cellar, and we could just discern Bullard's target, painted white, against the dark background of the clay. Bullard raised his revolver and fired twice, the bullets hitting the target in the center. "Oh! how beautiful they are!" laughed Nannie, holding up her hand to catch one.

An apprehensive look came into Tom Barton's eyes; but he laughed and said:

"He was out from under the buffalo-robe which covered them all, and on the seat beside the driver, before Nannie had time to cry:

"Tom, if you desert me like this, I'll never come out with you again!"

But the reins were already in Tom's hands, and he cut each of the spirited horses with the whip, so that they leaped forward at a break-neck pace.

"This is fine!" cried Will Hurst, and while his face lighted up with keen enjoyment of the rapid motion, the girls laughed in sympathy—all but Nannie, who felt surprised and a little chagrined that Tom should leave her side, even for such a lark.

"Tom! Where's your head?" cried Sam Gardner, after awhile. "You're not going in the right direction."

Hoping not to attract the notice of the others, Tom had taken a long sweep to the right, and was now heading straight for the nearest shore. Now he replied, evasively:

"Tell me how to drive!"

Thicker and thicker descended the snow-flakes. The distant shores, only marked by patches of white oak, whose brown leaves clung tenaciously to the stems, and some leafy hunk, on whose steep face the snow could find no resting-place, grew faint, then undistinguishable, while the feathery flakes increased to the size of plums. Ten minutes from the time it began to snow, the ice was covered an inch deep, and the snow no longer judged over how wide a radius it ranged.

"By Jove! fellows," cried Ned Sawyer, "I don't like the look of this. Suppose we lose our way! The sun will be down in two hours, and this isn't going to be a summer night."

Everybody saw in a flash why Tom had taken the reins and turned to the nearest shore, urging his horses fairly into a runaway pace.

Ruth Fawcley tremulously grasped the arm of Sam Gardner. Sadie Kingsford started forward, and when her feet touched the ground, looked about in the faces of all. Lou Barton reached toward her brother mutely. Nannie turned out her hand toward him and said aloud:

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Tom!" cried Tom. "No losing heart. We're as good as a dozen dead people yet. It doesn't make any difference where we strike the shore. We can find a farm-house inside of half an hour. Here, Jim, take the lines. You can drive as well as I can, now. All you have to do is to give the horses their own heads. I'll pull us through. Meanwhile I'll get back into the box and cheer the faint-hearts up a bit."

"It is so good of you to come, Tom," whispered Nannie, when he was again at her side, seeing that the rheumatic old ladies have their winter flannels, I always put my finger in the pie. I don't deserve any credit. It is not true benevolence at all, but simply that I have it in my nature to work and to work with a will, and these affairs happen to be the exciting ones which come in my way. I would have been all the same, no matter where I had been placed. For instance, if my sphere lay in the fashionable world, I would make more calls, see more people, know more of their hobbies, out-dress and outdance any other young lady in my set. I suppose you think I am talking of things I know nothing about."

"I don't doubt your ability. I was only thinking what conquests you would make there, and how unkind of fortune to have denied us such a queen. I wonder you can be contented here, when you might shine 'one above all compare,' Miss Yrill."

"I have never even thought of it."

"I think of it now. Mrs. Valdere has commissioned me to secure you as her guest for the season, and this visit of mine is for no other purpose."

Mrs. Valdere, his step-mother, was Xina's cousin, but for all taken she had given for years, the girl's existence might have been unknown to her. Indeed, it had been recalled to a very convenient memory by the fact that Valdere, for whom she had a motherly pride and fondness, had become entangled in an objectionable love-affair.

Whether divination or secret questioning revealed the fact that Xina was both a beauty and an heiress, matters not; Valdere was sent upon an unwilling mission, which had already lost every objectionable feature.

All the sunshine went out of the house of Otis Roth when Xina left it. Something, he could not tell what, but it fancy it must have been Valdere's management, had prevented him telling her all that was in his heart before her departure. It scarcely caused him a qualm of uneasiness; he had not a doubt of Xina's understanding between them was so perfect.

There was no use in stopping here, said Tom. "This crack must be our salvation, by giving us a fixed guide. We can mount two girls, wrapped in the buffalo-robes, on the remaining horse, and two must walk, turn and turn about."

Tom displayed his dauntless courage. Will a stern fortitude that did not quit; Sam was

she crowned him she whispered: "Samson No. 2?" and almost choked with suppressed laughter.

There was one question to be satisfied on which Tom would have forsworn his meerschaum, to wit: did this coquetish little sprite ever have a serious moment when she could learn to love him? To-day was not the first time, by a great many, that he had carried her in his arms; but he always got his hair pulled when he tried it. And when he asked her if she really did care anything for him, she arched her brows in mock dismay, and cried:

"Love such a great bear as you! No, indeed! I'm afraid of you!"

Next to them, along the same side of the "box," sat meek little Ruth Fawcley and her gallant, Sam Gardner.

She looked at him shyly out of the corner of her eye, and blushed every time he spoke to her; and during that awful moment when he was carrying her to the sleigh she would have died of shame had not she been kept in countenance by the other girls, who were "in the same fix." Sam was a harmless young man, with a face as smooth as Ruth's own; but he wrote verses that made Ruth cry, and the head that he sketched of her was "just lovely."

Opposite them Will Hurst did homage to the charms of his "strawberry blonde." Sam had heard the proverbial capriciousness of temper; but there was a steadiness in Will's gaze, when he chose to be serious, which made her stand just the least bit in awe of his displeasure, though she had never seen him manhandle or putting in an iron plate above.

Everybody predicted that Will would some day develop into a "solid man" in business circles. This, and the fact that he had the only full-grown mustache in the party, may have made him attractive in the girls' eyes, though he had as yet been no love-passages between them.

Last came Ned Sawyer and the tall and rather stately Lou Barton.

Ned was slight in build, with small hands and feet, light hair, light gray eyes, and a mischievous mustache; he played the piano with spirit, sung in a tenor voice, and waltzed divinely. It was probably his elegance that attracted the girls. On his side, he liked Lou because she was by all odds the most stylish girl the village could boast.

Any other of the village swains would have thought twice before catching this rather haughty young lady off her feet; but Ned, with a young lady's man's self-complacency, argued that if she "loved" him, she would "take" him, and he had but to take his pick among the other village belles; they would all be glad enough to get him!

They were near the center of the lake, the nearest shore at least four miles distant, the furthest not less than eight or ten, when Sam Gardner asked:

"Isn't it getting rather dark? Hallo! it has clouded over!"

All looked up. The sky was a dull-gray pall of clouds, and the stars were hidden.

"Shouldn't wonder if we had snow," ventured Ned Sawyer. "It will spoil all the skating. That's pleasant!"

Even as he spoke, a white flake came fluttering down, then another, and another, until the air was full of the feathery crystals.

"Oh! how beautiful they are!" laughed Nannie, holding up her hand to catch one.

An apprehensive look came into Tom Barton's eyes; but he laughed and said:

"He was out from under the buffalo-robe which covered them all, and on the seat beside the driver, before Nannie had time to cry:

"Tom, if you desert me like this, I'll never come out with you again!"

But the reins were already in Tom's hands, and he cut each of the spirited horses with the whip, so that they leaped forward at a break-neck pace.

"This is fine!" cried Will Hurst, and while his face lighted up with keen enjoyment of the rapid motion, the girls laughed in sympathy—all but Nannie, who felt surprised and a little chagrined that Tom should leave her side, even for such a lark.

"Tom! Where's your head?" cried Sam Gardner, after awhile. "You're not going in the right direction."

Hoping not to attract the notice of the others, Tom had taken a long sweep to the right, and was now heading straight for the nearest shore. Now he replied, evasively:

"Tell me how to drive!"

Thicker and thicker descended the snow-flakes. The distant shores, only marked by patches of white oak, whose brown leaves clung tenaciously to the stems, and some leafy hunk, on whose steep face the snow could find no resting-place, grew faint, then undistinguishable, while the feathery flakes increased to the size of plums. Ten minutes from the time it began to snow, the ice was covered an inch deep, and the snow no longer judged over how wide a radius it ranged.

"By Jove! fellows," cried Ned Sawyer, "I don't like the look of this. Suppose we lose our way! The sun will be down in two hours, and this isn't going to be a summer night."

Everybody saw in a flash why Tom had taken the reins and turned to the nearest shore, urging his horses fairly into a runaway pace.

Ruth Fawcley tremulously grasped the arm of Sam Gardner. Sadie Kingsford started forward, and when her feet touched the ground, looked about in the faces of all. Lou Barton reached toward her brother mutely. Nannie turned out her hand toward him and said aloud:

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Tom!" cried Tom. "No losing heart. We're as good as a dozen dead people yet. It doesn't make any difference where we strike the shore. We can find a farm-house inside of half an hour. Here, Jim, take the lines. You can drive as well as I can, now. All you have to do is to give the horses their own heads. I'll pull us through. Meanwhile I'll get back into the box and cheer the faint-hearts up a bit."

"It is so good of you to come, Tom," whispered Nannie, when he was again at her side, seeing that the rheumatic old ladies have their winter flannels, I always put my finger in the pie. I don't deserve any credit. It is not true benevolence at all, but simply that I have it in my nature to work and to work with a will, and these affairs happen to be the exciting ones which come in my way. I would have been all the same, no matter where I had been placed. For instance, if my sphere lay in the fashionable world, I would make more calls, see more people, know more of their hobbies, out-dress and outdance any other young lady in my set. I suppose you think I am talking of things I know nothing about."

"I don't doubt your ability. I was only thinking what conquests you would make there, and how unkind of fortune to have denied us such a queen. I wonder you can be contented here, when you might shine 'one above all compare,' Miss Yrill."

"I have never even thought of it."

"I think of it now. Mrs. Valdere has commissioned me to secure you as her guest for the season, and this visit of mine is for no other purpose."

Mrs. Valdere, his step-mother, was Xina's cousin, but for all taken she had given for years, the girl's existence might have been unknown to her. Indeed, it had been recalled to a very convenient memory by the fact that Valdere, for whom she had a motherly pride and fondness, had become entangled in an objectionable love-affair.

Whether divination or secret questioning revealed the fact that Xina was both a beauty and an heiress, matters not; Valdere was sent upon an unwilling mission, which had already lost every objectionable feature.

All the sunshine went out of the house of Otis Roth when Xina left it. Something, he could not tell what, but it fancy it must have been Valdere's management, had prevented him telling her all that was in his heart before her departure. It scarcely caused him a qualm of uneasiness; he had not a doubt of Xina's understanding between them was so perfect.

There was no use in stopping here, said Tom. "This crack must be our salvation, by giving us a fixed guide. We can mount two girls, wrapped in the buffalo-robes, on the remaining horse, and two must walk, turn and turn about."

Tom displayed his dauntless courage. Will a stern fortitude that did not quit; Sam was

ready to work like a hero, if somebody else would only lead. Ned was—rather helpless.

Ruth showed resignation; Sadie fretful helplessness; Lou resoluteness; Nannie—she trusted in Tom.

"Let Sadie and Ruth ride first," said Lou, taking the arm of her escort, who now yielded to her direction.

"Wrap them up well," cautioned Tom, and started forward with Nannie at his side.

"Midget," he said to her, "I'd carry you, if I had a horse to wrap you up in; but without it you can only keep your blood in circulation by walking."

"You're always good, Tom," she replied, pressing his arm; and after a pause, "Tom, we must not live to see another day together."

"Tut! tut!" began Tom; but she interrupted him.

"It is true, isn't it?"

"There is such a possibility, certainly. I suppose I may as well admit it."

"Tom, I want to tell you something. I may never have another opportunity. Stop down."

He complied.

Suddenly raising on tiptoe she kissed him on the lips.

"There, Tom," she said, "I want to tell you with my own lips, before I have lost the power, that though I have teased you so mercilessly, I have loved you all along. Oh, Tom! I have slept with your picture at my lips, and wakened in the night and found myself sobbing with sheer happiness at the thought that you loved me best in all the world. I wish I had told you this long ago, Tom, and made you happy during the time I have wasted in tormenting you."

"Why, you dear girl," murmured Tom, with tears in his eyes, "you have made me the happiest fellow in the world for over a year."

"Not always, Tom. I've seen pain in your eyes, sometimes, when I have plagued you. Oh! if I had been kept in such uncertainty for a year, I know I should have died!"

"Of course I always knew that you must really love me; but I confess that it is a little more satisfying to hear you say so," admitted honest Tom.

A new phase in the character of his lady-love was now disclosed to him. Who would have believed that so much tenderness lay hidden beneath such levity!

Suddenly Tom stopped with a suppressed cry.

"What is it, Tom?" asked Nannie.

"Midget," said Tom, in a strange voice, "if we get out of this will you marry me?"

"Oh, Tom! How can you ask such a question, on the very brink of the grave, maybe?" said his lady-love, reproachfully.

"But will you?"

"Yes, Tom."

"As soon as you like."

"On the first day of May? That's your birthday, you know."

"Yes, dear. It is good of you to think of that."

"Honor bright, you will marry me on the first day of May?"

"Yes, Tom, if you wish it. But how strangely you talk."

"Hurrah!" yelled Tom, and caught her up and sealed the bargain on her lips in a twinkling.

"Hurrah!" he repeated to the others, who had now come up with him. "There's the shore, within a rod of where we stand. Look up! Do you see that overhanging tree? There's not two feet that on the shores of the lake. Within a stone throw over that bank are waiting for us a red-hot fire and all the cider we can drink, to say nothing of such a welcome as only old Tim Waterhouse and his hearty old dame can give!"

All looked up. The bank was hidden by snow so as to be indistinguishable, but overhead the outlines of a scraggy oak could be faintly traced, as if loomed through the gathering gloom, amid the falling snow.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted Tom again. "I have found present safety and happiness for life at the same time. Bear witness all, that this lady promises that if we come safely through this adventure, she will marry me on the first day of May!"

"Yes, Tom," laughed Nannie, fairly jumping up and down with fun, "but I didn't say what year! It may not be before the next Centennial!"

Xina.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

XINA walked home over the crisp snow, as the first flush of the morning stained the eastern sky. She had been sitting up with a neighbor's child, but the glow of exercise had taken the place of her fagged look as she opened the door. A great, fragrant wood-fire burned within, and two young men stood before it.

Both were an everyday sight to Xina, but Valdere, who had not yet put off the furs and wraps of travel, was an immediate object of grateful interest in her eyes. Handsome, aristocratic, thoroughly at ease—Roth, poor, honest fellow! already felt keenly the contrast between them.

"Back so soon?" said he, brightening as he always did at sight of Xina. "I meant to have gone for you. How is Richier?"

"Well," she answered, and he knew she meant well beyond the possibility of earthly ills forever.

Valdere, who was not personally given to humanitarianism, found himself capable of admiring acts of mercy in others. This tall, fair girl, with her coronet of golden braids, and earnest, shining eyes, looking like St. Cecilia, claimed his veneration and respect. He had the rare faculty of seeming to sympathize, and in five minutes Xina was talking to him as animatedly as though she had known him for years.

"Yes, I really don't know what the neighborhood would do without me," she laughed. "No matter what is going on, from a wedding to a child's tea-party, from naming the babies to seeing that the rheumatic old ladies have their winter flannels, I always put my finger in the pie. I don't deserve any credit. It is not true benevolence at all, but simply that I have it in my nature to work and to work with a will, and these affairs happen to be the exciting ones which come in my way. I would have been all the same, no matter where I had been placed. For instance, if my sphere lay in the fashionable world, I would make more calls, see more people, know more of their hobbies, out-dress and outdance any other young lady in my set. I suppose you think I am talking of things I know nothing about."

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